DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 177 073 SO 012 012

AUTHOR Reardon, Betty
TITLE The Child and World Order: Reflections on International Year of the Child. The Whole Earth Papers, No. 11.
INSTITUTION Global Education Associates, East Orange, N.J.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 11p.
AVAILABLE FROM Global Education Associates, 552 Park Avenue, East Orange, New Jersey 07017 ($0.70, quantity discounts available)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Advocacy; *Childhood Needs; *Child Welfare; Civil Liberties; *Futures (of Society); *Global Approach; Helping Relationship; Human Dignity; Individual Power; Peace; Quality of Life; Values

ABSTRACT

Reflection upon childrens' rights and needs and upon society's values with regard to children has been stimulated by the United Nation's designation of 1979 as the International Year of the Child (IYC). Conflicting images related to children and childhood have emerged as a result of this increased concern with young people. These include that children are innocent victims of environmental and political policies, cherished possessions of their families, the hope of the future, and dependents who are incapable of coping on their own. In IYC-related activities, the United Nations has called attention to suffering of children from ill health and economic disadvantagement, the need for effective child advocates, the dearth of resources available for children's needs, and the lack of research on the survival and well-being of children. A world-order approach to childrens' needs would focus on assessment of the present situation, diagnosis, projection of a preferred situation (in which children would be participants rather than victims), and policy suggestions. Values stressed in this world order approach to children include peace, economic well-being, social justice, ecological balance, and participation in decision making. The conclusion is that children will benefit from society which stresses human values rather than technical and material values, provides a healthful environment, encourages social security and education for all, and offers expectation of a bright future. (DB)

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OCT 1 1979

THE WHOLE EARTH PAPERS

Published by Global Education Associates

No. 11

THE CHILD AND WORLD ORDER:

Reflections on International Year of the Child

BY BETTY REARDON

(Dedicated to Raphael)

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Those who have experienced or attended the birth of a child often describe it as a peak human experience—one filled with mystery and awe—a miracle, a spiritual experience without parallel. To experience the mystery of the birth of a child is to experience the mystery of the genesis of life. It is to see in one new being the whole past of human experience and touch the mystery of the future. It is to know the profound significance of *each* human life and to be deeply in touch with the miracle of *all* life.

Betty Reardon begins her exploration of the child and world order with two images of very real, flesh and blood children in our times. They expose our worst fears and underscore our best hopes for the future—fears and hopes that flow from our current response (or lack of it) to the needs of children everywhere. It is an exploration that analyzes the ways in which children are victims of the present international system of competing nation-states, where the paradigm of dominance and power is the basis of decision-making. It is also an exploration of a preferred future in which the lives and well-being of children are at the heart of decision-making.

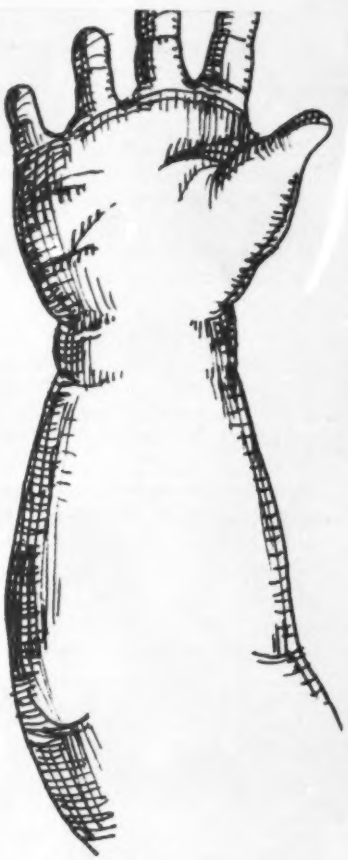
The International Year of the Child (IYC) was set in 1979 by the United Nations to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It is a time to assess what progress has been made in the realization of those rights and to generate further activity over the next years at local, national and world levels on behalf of children. It is an appropriate time to assess our present values, policies and structures according to the way in which they serve children and, through them, the world future.

Presently over 500 million children lack the minimal necessities of life that should be their birthright—things so basic as adequate food, shelter, health care and education. Child abuse, children's suicides, alienation and crime by the young are increasing at alarming rates in the more developed countries.

The eco-system-which is the life-support system of future as well as present generations of children—is threatened by the uncontrolled dumping of toxic chemical, radioactive and other dangerous pollutants. The diminishment of arable lands (due to industrial expansion, population growth, erosion and other humanly caused factors) threatens future food supplies. Children everywhere are victims of an escalating arms race and their future survival is threatened by nuclear proliferation and the increasing possibility of nuclear war.

Ultimately, the significance and success of the activities generated by the Year of the Child will not be measured by the accomplishments of a single year or even a three-year plan of action. It will be measured in the long run of history by whether or not children and their future were put at the center of concern and at the top of the human agenda, or whether they continued to be victims of upside-down priorities in which their future well-being and very lives were sacrificed in the amassment of economic, industrial and military power.

— Patricia Mische



THE CHILD AND WORLD ORDER

BY BETTY REARDON

Reflection upon the International Year of the Child brings forth two interrelated and strongly conflicting images. From one we fashion a vision of hope for the future of the child, for it manifests creative life-giving energies. The other image is of destructive, death-dealing forces. From the human, life-giving energies and capacities there emerges the capability of overcoming the dehumanizing public policies that currently condition the future prospects of children everywhere.

An image which poignantly illustrates one of the death-dealing policies is a newspaper photograph of a pregnant woman seated on a bench in the sports arena in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The arena was used during the last week of March, 1979, as a shelter for those evacuated from the vicinity of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. Beside the woman sits a small child with legs reaching only to the edge of the bench. Each gazes vacantly ahead, not knowing when the "crisis" which has resulted from the emission of deadly radiatior into their immediate environment will be "contained."

This is the image of the child—born and unborn—as *innocent victim;* the image of the powerless, ignorant pawn in the game of nuclear madness played with cunning, but not caution, by the powerful and knowing, who do not number these small humans among their customers or constituents and who afford little or no concern to the interests of the very young or of future generations.

The positive image is of a boy of about nine or ten, shabbily dressed, with an inquisitive brown face and bright black eyes, searching, weighing everything in sight. He has come into a totally strange environment, the mid-Manhattan office where his teacher formerly worked. Now the teacher works at the elementary school the boy attends in East Harlem. The office visit is part of a field trip to a new and strange land, and this youngster and the others in the group are eager to meet the natives and see the sights. He stretches out his hand to a middle-aged, white woman. "My name is Raphael. I'm glad to meet you."

The gaze is straight and open. The words quite likely could have been rehearsed as part of the "briefing" for the "foreign venture," but the sense of personhood—of *being* Raphael—clearly came from a centered self. Raphael knew much of himself and gave forth the sense that he was the protagonist in the drama of his own destiny.

The middle-aged woman returned his greeting with admiration and hope that the centered self of Raphael would continue to develop even in the midst of the "jungle" of an inner city school maintained by a society that cares more for "national security" than for social security or human needs.

A PREFERRED FUTURE FOR CHILDREN

The vision of hope which emerges from this positive image is a vision of a society which conceives of *the child as a person,* not as innocent victim, nor even a most cherished "possession." Such a society would not need special "protective" measures for children; for the conditions of neglect and abuse of human beings and of the human needs of present and future generations would be socially intolerable.

The person must become our central concern and the child as person our guiding concept in dealing with the concerns of the child in the present and future.

A social order which nurtures the personhood of the most vulnerable of people would be one in which all persons are so valued that the society is not *obliged* to meet their needs but *wishes* to do so. Such a social order would not squander vast resources on nuclear systems of power and weaponry while hopeful young girls and boys struggle for self-worth in inadequate schools. Nor would it deny fundamental human dignity to their parents and proffer excuses of national security in the face of unmet human needs.

The society envisioned here would hold no probability that Raphael, by the age of 13, would be seeking solace for an eroding sense of self in drugs, or avenging the pain of discrimination and abuse by random violence or systematic criminal behavior. The society as a whole would manifest a responsibility to meet the human needs of all children, including the need to develop their capacities and talents and the need to share in making decisions about themselves and the social groups in which they function. Such a society would recognize *the child as participant,* a social being.

IYC FOCUS ON SOCIAL CHANGE

The child as dependent, incapable of coping on her own or of determining appropriate action for herself and her peers, and subject to the guidance and rule of adults in all matters, is a component of that structure of social relations which currently governs all human affairs. This is the paradigm of dependency and dominance, with fixed roles for the "dominant" and the "dependent," be they parents and children, teachers and students, men and women, or "leaders" and citizens.

In this structure, the power to decide resides with one, and the obligation to obey with the other. The roles never change according to capacity and circumstance. Even though children "grow up" and students "graduate," the roles of child and student change little, if at all. Most grow and graduate

into some new form of dependency on the powerful few, having to trust that their best interests are being appropriately taken care of by those with power over them.

One of the already evident achievements of IYC is that it demonstrates in the case of children—as the International Women's Year did in that of women and the New International Economic Order in that of the developing countries - that there is little or no reason to continue that trust in those with power over them. The developing countries are rapidly becoming their own advocates as the trust in the leadership of the industrial world steadily deteriorates. Women are struggling, too, to become their own advocates. But children, whose dependency is but a stage of human life, have, during that stage, the least, if any, chance of becoming their own advocates.

Like other dependents they can with not so great difficulty be mobilized in the interests of others, be they the Pied Piper himself or some manufacturer of a sugar-loaded cereal playing some equally seductive tune, but they have little chance of mobilizing for themselves. They badly need not only the advocacy called for by IYC, but representation which they do not have under our present social systems.

It is thus the case of children which most urgently calls for some drastic changes in our social order. Sad to say, only limited attention has been given to this fact by IYC observers. Leaders have cited the future of our children as reason to act in favor of world peace or economic justice or environmental balance. However, political action on these issues as a means of advocating the interests of children hardly exists outside the efforts of a few non-governmental organizations, mainly women's organizations concerned with peace. Indeed, we have been cautioned not to let the major problems of the arms race and the structural inequities of the world economy deflect our energies from the tasks of relieving specific situations within the present time and system.

Child development has been the most important theme of the year, and emphasis has been placed on immediate needs of particular populations of children. There is no question that child development should be of crucial concern to all and that any action which can be taken to relieve children's present suffering should be taken. There is, however, some real question about the underlying causes of the suffering of children and what IYC will contribute toward their elimination.

IYC is constructively focusing on many urgent needs of children. I do not question the obligation of society to try to meet those immediate needs and relieve those urgent sufferings of children for which resources are available and remedies apparent. What should be called into consideration is the framework in which the resources and remedies are applied. For example, far more attention should be given to the effects of the arms race on children.

Officials frequently note that the spending of $400 billion per year on the arms race constitutes a major obstacle to the allocation of resources to meeting the needs of children. The United Nations Special Session on Disarmament made specific, if passing, reference to the relationship of disarmament to the principles of the IYC; but no nation has announced a cut in arms expenditures in observance of the needs of children for peace and true security. Nor, indeed, has anyone suggested equivalent amounts to be spent on the *true* security needs of children. These security needs—as defined by the late Senator Hubert Humphrey in the 1977 edition of World Military and Social Expenditures[1]—include food, basic health care and education. In fact, the U.N. General Assembly, in declaring the *Year of the Child*, did not even provide funds to support its activities, leaving it, like the Women's Year, limited in potential because of its dependence on voluntary contributions.

Nothing reflects the values of a society so clearly as the way it allocates resources. The U.N. Secretary-General originally estimated the three-year cost of the IYC Secretariat at about $4.2 million (later increased by $1 million) or about one-hundredth of one percent of the annual cost of the arms race and far less than the cost of one nuclear power plant. Clearly, we need advocacy and action to change these value priorities.

A WORLD ORDER APPROACH

One of the purposes of this year of "advocacy and action" for children should be the development of some policy-making criteria which will help us to assess which forms of advocacy and which particular actions are likely to lead to the fundamental changes necessary to prevent children from being victims.

As a practical step in the formulation of such criteria, the child should become a focus for world-order studies and grass roots initiatives toward world-order alternatives. By world-order studies we mean the search for the knowledge and the motivational energies needed to bring about those major structural changes most likely to assure the realization of values essential to human survival and well being, in this case, the survival and well-being of children.[2] Those values supportive of a more human world order have been identified by the Institute for World Order[3] as *peace, economic well being, social justice, ecological balance* and *participation in decision-making*.

The usual method of world-order study as it has been developed by the research of the Institute for World Order entails four steps:

1. an assessment of the present situation (here symbolized by the negative image of the child as victim),
2. a diagnosis of the situation in terms of the above world-order values,
3. a projection of a preferred situation (here symbolized by the image of the child as participant),
4. some policy suggestions to prescribe relief for the problems of value deprivation and to initiate the structural changes required to achieve the preferred alternative.

Such a study would provide more than a challenging agenda for the whole three-year period of IYC action. While we cannot hope to deal with the whole framework in this essay, we can put forth some ideas and suggestions which may help to bring a meaningful world order focus to the International Year of the Child and to the succeeding years of effort on behalf of children. With a beginning assessment of the present situation already begun above, we will start here with a diagnosis of the situation of children in terms of world order values.

Peace

Peace, the first world order value, is essential to the well being of children. Children have always been victimized by warfare. They have been orphaned, made refugees, subjected to starvation, and begotten and abandoned by foreign soldiers. Modern warfare has increased the dimensions of their victimization through bombing attacks, guerilla warfare, counterinsurgency strategies and the use of chemicals which observe no distinction between the military and civilian populations.

Nuclear warfare brings these dimensions to horrifying proportions in light of the potential genetic damage to the unborn and the fact that small children are more vulnerable to radiation. The chances of nuclear warfare, according to such reputable sources as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, grow greater by the year. So the child of today can only look forward to the increasing probability of nuclear war occuring within her lifetime.

Thus, the frustration of peace—in the sense of the absence of war (what the peace researchers call a *negative peace*)—portends disastrous consequences for children of this and future generations. But the frustration of *positive peace* (defined by the researchers as the presence of life sustaining conditions, or the positive pursuit of the other world order values) also victimizes children. It condemns millions of this generation of children to poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance.

Economic Well Being

Should we assume that the minimal condition for economic well being could be met by nothing more than adequate food, that

value, too, is sorely frustrated. The United Nations documents the fact that at least 10 million children suffer from such a degree of malnutrition that their very lives are threatened. This figure does not include those who have suffered other forms of malnutrition—such as pre-natal and neo-natal deprivations—through inadequate diets for their mothers. These deprivations result in the permanent impairment of children's capacities for physical and mental development. Carlos Mallman of the Bariloche Foundation in Argentina has called this impairment the "irreversible injustice."[4]

Social Justice

There is evidence, too, of an irreversible injustice suffered by millions of children brought up in such racist societies that social justice cannot exist. The child most victimized by racism is the one who from her first breath lives as a member of an "inferior," deprived group and daily is bombarded by messages from the society reinforcing "inferiority." A positive self-image can result only from a constant battle against "social reality." Too many children are overwhelmed by the struggle and succumb to self-hatred or hatred of the oppressor, thereby contributing further to the cycle of violence and victimization.

Nor is it conducive to social justice when the adult with whom the experience a primary relationship is considered socially inferior. For early nurturance of virtually all children of the world is a female responsibility. No matter the culture, the class or the caste, the first "image" of adulthood is a woman. Thus all children, both male and female, are to some degree the victims of sexism.

The serious and destructive consequences to children of receiving early nurturance from overburdened, "oppressed" mothers has been explored by Irma Garcia Chafardet, a Venezuelan lawyer. Ms. Chafardet asserts that this relationship contributes to fearful and agressive behavior and limits the capacity to love.[5] The personal and social implications of this are further indication of the child as victim of social injustice.

Ecological Balance

The child as victim of ecological deterioration was forcefully conveyed by the image of the pregnant mother and her small child in the shelter in Hershey, Pennsylvania. There may be no more flagrant violation of the rights of the child than the suppression of the evidence of genetic damage to the third generation of offspring of those who have suffered radiation exposure, not to mention the acknowledged effects on presently growing children and unborn infants.

But that image is but a tiny part of the deprivation of ecological balance. There is no child in any major city of the world who can grow and develop with the full quota necessary for the healthy development of organs. Those born into the industrially fouled air which has caused illness and death among millions of adults—not only from cancer but from a multiplicity of newly discovered mental and physical "environmental diseases"—stand a very limited chance of developing any natural defenses against these diseases. These are, we are told, the "acceptable," if not "natural," risks of "progress"—progress defined by a public policy which values industrial development and growth of the Gross National Product more than human development and the growth of healthy children.

"The international security system is a war system. No more significant step could be taken to assure life and health to the world's children than one toward the replacement of that system with a peace system, a system in which peace is maintained by global institutions for security and conflict resolution."

Participation

Public policies are often derived through a process which denies the value of participation in decision-making to those who will be most negatively affected: infants, children and the unborn of this and future generations. Indeed, public policy is too frequently made without the participation of those who are most likely to be negatively affected, from urban renewal to constructing nuclear plants. Texas citizens may have voted to go ahead with the opening of a local nuclear plant after the Three Mile Island crisis, but what weight was given to the potential effects on children and future generations? So it goes. The middle aged and elderly decide to send the young to war. Predominantly male legislatures voted down equal rights for women. Adults perpetuate a system in which the legal rights of children are limited and difficult to defend. So the child continues to remain a

dependent rather than participant and her rights and interests have little or no political significance. The point is that participation is essential to the realization of rights and to the achievement of world order values.

Is not the right to a body formed by healthy genetic material as basic as the fundamental right to life, a right cited as the initial right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Would it not be better for our children if we attempted to assure this basic right to life and health rather than to make it necessary to work for remedial rights later such as the right to "special care if handicapped" and "to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster." With few exceptions, the reactions of most leadership, if not the entire public, to the events at Three Mile Island would make it seem that few have given consideration to such a right.

What, if any, consideration is given to the effects on children, unborn infants and future generations in decisions to build nuclear plants or to sell nuclear reactors, much less to test nuclear weapons? Would the decisions be the same if the voices of children and unborn were heard?

It must be recognized that calling for participation is mere lip service unless those who are to participate are prepared to do so and unless the mechanisms for participation are put in place. Although minimal, the experience of developing countries as they were being "prepared for independence" demonstrated this factor. Participation and exercise of decision-making were extended as the institutions were developed. As children develop they should be allowed to exercise participation rights consistent with the stage of development of their decision-making ability. During that time when the development stage is not adequate to the complexity of the decisions to be made, their interests should be vigorously defended by advocates.

The above concerns are fundamental systemic issues. They critically condition the child's life. If they are seen only as background to IYC and if we get on with immediate IYC business without careful attention to long-range structural solutions, there is little hope that underlying conditions which negatively impact on children will be improved. Here, "long range" means more than the three to ten year period connoted in IYC literature. It means a generation to a century in chronological perspective.

In order to alleviate the conditions which have made IYC necessary in the first place and to produce long lasting results in the future attainment of IYC goals, it is essential that world order analysis and approaches be applied to the condition of the child. The goals of the IYC need approaches which are global as well as local in scope. And for long lasting effect these goals need to be approached in the context of building a preferred future for all the world's children around the values of *peace, economic well being, social justice, ecological balance* and *participation in decision-making.*

WORLD ORDER POLICY DEVELOPMENT

World order inquiry is a contemporary form of humanism which espouses two dimensions of human solidarity: *universal* and *futuristic*. As the interests of no people on the earth can be discounted, neither can we ignore the interests of future generations. Were these dimensions of human solidarity to be seriously included in debates on national security and the arms race or on the energy crisis and nuclear power, the whole framework of the "nuclear debate" would be drastically changed. And so might the future of this and coming generations of children.

We must learn to think in planetary, long range terms. In regard to each proposed policy we must ask the fundamental global and future-oriented questions: what are the consequences for *all the earth's children*, and what will be the effects on the next three generations?

We do not underestimate either the intellectual or the emotional difficulty of cultivating this kind of practical and normative analysis in a society which so prizes immediate satisfaction and which has a concept of humanity which tends to exclude the distant and different. If people are not like us or near us, they lose—in our perception—much of their humanity, and their welfare is a source of less concern.

Yet, the proclamation of the International Year of the Child is itself an encouraging indicator. So too may be the stance of the "Right to Life Movement," now so preoccupied about abortion and threats to the life of the unborn. Is not this concern about the right to life a potential step toward a companion concern for the right to a decent quality of life—a right based upon the presumption that all children everywhere and in every generation have the right to a high probability of being born with a sound body into a physical and social environment which will nurture their full human development? Perhaps there are some shared fundamental values on both sides of this and other issues which could move us toward this nurturing environment.

Certainly much of the argument of the anti-nuclear and disarmament movements would indicate that it is possible for more and more people to apply the criteria of *universalism* and *futurism* to major public issues. If children are to be a focus of concern—not only this year but in the human journey into the future—these criteria should be paramount in discourses on global problems.

A PARADIGM SHIFT

The wider application of these criteria could be the first steps toward the "paradigm shift," the totally new way of confronting public issues, which so many globalist and world-order advocates believe to be essential to the resolution of planetary problems. Several other changes in perspective moving in the direction of such a paradigm shift also emerge from reviewing the reports on activities and statements of purposes of IYC programs.

However, there still appears to be too much emphasis on "international" and "institutional" efforts to aid the "individual" child. While the particular efforts themselves are commendable, the frame of reference is not constructive in world-order terms. For it keeps us trapped in the same world view in which the systemic problems developed in the first place.

There is a need to move from the present constructs of international, institutional and individual perspectives to the *global, communal* and *personal.*

A Personal Perspective

Starting with the last of the three because it is the most central to the interests of children, we might ask what is the essential conceptual difference between the "individual" and the "person" which would contribute to a paradigm shift? Individual is more a biological than a social concept. The individual child can be distinctly identified by a body which can and does function independently of all other bodies once the child has been weaned. The idea of child as body, as the host of needs which are primarily physical, relegates the child to a lower status, a step below all adults, especially adult males. Like women, children are perceived as primarily physical and secondly emotional, rather than also being rational, reasoning beings.

Emphasis on the individual has encouraged a form of competition and hierarchy among individuals. Some have called this "Social Darwinism." Such a concept accepts that some who are stronger, more able or deserving individuals have the right to more benefits, and that it is "natural" for some to fall by the wayside if they are weaker or less able. It also erodes our capacities to care for others and to place a high value on community and sharing.

While some defend the concept of individual rights as a major contribution of the West to human society, it should be noted that only a small percentage of the human family have been accorded these rights. Those who developed the concept seemed only to see individuals like themselves fully worthy of these rights. Adult, European males were the subject of these rights and for the

most part accepted without question their own status of dominion over lands and people.

This idea also contributes to the concept of the child as *property*—a concept which is dehumanizing—even when she is the "most cherished possession" of her parents. The child in most societies is legally and socially a non-person. Think only for a moment of the social and psychological import of one of the first questions frequently asked of lost children: "Who do you belong to?" When manifest in the institution of slavery, this property concept is abhorrent to most societies. Yet virtually all accept the status of children as the property (as well as the responsibiliy and dependents) of their parents.

The significance of *person* rather than *individual* in thinking of or acting on behalf of a particular child or indeed, of all children not only holds the possibility of endowing them with the full range of human attributes. It also makes it possible to consider the child as *participant*, as a *social being*—even an *autonomous* if not *independent* being.

The most significant attribute of personhood is that it is interrelational. We are only truly persons in relation to others, and it is in large measure the depth and breadth of those relations which determine the degree to which we can develop our personhood. When such relations are limited by our own *independence* or by being locked into fixed social roles or by being unable to acknowledge the personhood of others, so too is our potential to develop personhood limited.

Some would claim that only by acknowledging the personhood of children can we overcome the reality of non-personhood, particularly in economic and political terms. Under our present system of dependency /dominance millions of people are nonpersons. The exploited masses, particularly those in the "dependent" or "developing" nations, are mere objects to those who control and plan most aspects of the world's economy. Certainly they have no voice in making either economic or political policy. If they did, might we still have a higher priority given to military spending than to development programs, a tragedy so clearly documented in Ruth Sivard's "World Military and Social Expenditures"[6] ?

An autonomous person is capable of acting in her own behalf. But while such a person is self-directed, she is not necessarily self-centered. An *independent individual* frequently puts her own interests above those of others. She does not function well interdependently. Her own personhood is thereby stunted by the limits *independence* and *individualism* have placed on her social interactions.

One of the major objectives of world-order studies is to devise methods of learning which will contribute toward personal capacities and a social order which nurtures personhood. One of the primary steps to be taken toward this end is for all of us to think of children as persons. Such a step would be to the advantage of all who are denied their personhood, not merely the young, who currently comprise the largest group of "nonpersons."

Such a step would also help to overcome the negative values of "independence" and "rugged individualism" which lie at the heart of the competitive system—a system which seeks to preserve itself through such life-threatening devices as nuclear bombs and nuclear power plants.

Many of us who are peace educators advocate teaching children to care for others and to respect human rights. How can they learn this lesson if they themselves are not cared for and respected as persons? How can they learn social responsibility when they are not permitted to hold responsibility or indeed to be "held responsible" for the consequences of their own behavior?

Some honest acts of advocacy during this year would be to develop ways by which children could learn to be their own advocates, to provide ways in which children could be active community participants—and most important of all—to open up opportunities for them to participate in making some of the decisions which directly affect them. By such forms of advocacy we would acknowledge the personhood of children, and provide opportunities for them to learn responsibility.

A Community Perspective

Responsibility and participation are two crucial elements in the development of community and are, therefore, essential to devising communal rather than institutional responses to human problems. They are the elements through which persons define and pursue their own interests.

Community also connotes the sharing of benefits and problems. The deterioration of such sharing in our society has produced a degree of alienation which is emotionally starving many of our children. These children grow up without sufficient personal attention and nurturing through which they learn to care for themselves and others.

The complexity of life in the industrial world has eroded community, and many of the social needs formerly met by private and communal means are now met by public institutions incapable of manifesting personal concern. Decisions about matters having profound personal effects on human lives are made on the basis of abstract data by "public servants."

The institutional responses to needs have been both inadequate and alienating. The tales of dehumanizing and resource-wasting conditions in public institutions are never more alarming than when they concern children. Often children are institutionalized because their families do not have sufficient means to care for their needs. Those in need of "public assistance" in instances of family and personal crisis are expected to—indeed, have little choice other than to—resort to public institutions.

Resorting to public institutions is not, however, solely the result of limited family resources. It is also a consequence of a lack of community support structures. Seldom do neighbors and grandmothers now perform the caring functions they had in earlier forms of community. Grandmother may be institutionalized herself! And the neighbors for the most part change frequently and care little.

Children brought up without an experience of community are not likely to become community builders nor to have that sense of continuity and connectedness which is fundamental to constructive human relations. More important, they grow up without a sense of the possibility of meeting human needs in a humane and personal way and without criteria by which to judge the human adequacy of institutions.

Not having experienced community rights and responsibilities, children are inadequately prepared to challenge the institutions which control their lives. Contemporary institutions are for the most part inadequate to meet the needs they were designed to fulfill. They are silently tolerated by a public lacking in the experience which would enable them to recognize and act against intolerable institutions, be they vast power industries, a gigantically wasteful military establishment or "children's homes."

This is not to say that the public order bears no responsibility to meet personal and communal needs, but that personal and communal modes should be sought to meet those needs.

A Global Perspective

The springs of this institutional trap, the mechanism by which we are held in thrall, is the present international system of sovereign nations states; a system in which nearly all other social and political considerations are secondary to national security. Because each nation is responsible for its own defense and security, because there are no globally recognized procedures for peaceful conflict resolution, war is the means for resolving major international conflicts and defending the national interest. The international security system is a war system. No more significant step could be taken to assure life and health to the world's children than one toward the replacement of that system with a peace system, a system in which peace is

Getting involved: the role of children

Critical to the success of the International Year of the Child will be the extent to which children themselves become involved–not only as participants in IYC events and programmes but in actual planning and implementation. It is today's children, after all, who will have the final word on whether or not IYC accomplished what it set out to do.

Areas in which children are participating run the full gamut of IYC activities. Generally, the sooner children get involved the greater the enthusiasm, as projects become theirs rather than something imposed upon them by adults. In Quebec, NGO organizers established an Advisory Council of children to contribute their ideas about the agenda for the Year–parents' views on the same subjects were quite different. In France, a Commission of Children has been proposed to serve as consultants on media. Other types of child involvement at the planning stage include symposia and informal exchanges of ideas. It is hoped these will lead to constructive action rather than publicity exploitation.

Children are getting into IYC action at local or national governmental levels –as participants in officially-convened sessions or through their own mock meetings. They are also learning more about the world of their parents. In Denmark, for example, parents will visit their children's schools and children will visit their parents' working places to understand better what the other does all day.

Artistic, cultural, and communications fields offer great opportunities to children's self-expression. In Rwanda a series of art contests was held using locally available materials. Danish children are publishing a newspaper for the ages 8 to 11. Children are put in contact with others on "the other side of the world" by methods as simple as pen pal campaigns or as sophisticated as satellite communication systems. Others communicate through means as tangible as a tree or a bucket of water.

Whatever the activity, the principle is generally the same: to give children a stronger voice regarding the future they will inherit.

— From Development Forum, April, 1979.

maintained by global institutions for security and conflict resolution.

What we need to become aware of is that to continue to think in "international" rather than global terms impedes true "security." For such thinking perpetuates the primacy of the nation-state. Excessive nationalism prevents the development of a true global community based on the common interests of all the world's peoples. In a world political system in which each nation is responsible for its own security—i.e., must "defend" itself against other nation-states—"national security" is an unattainable goal and "peace" is a tenuous condition which can break down at any moment. For any nation might at any time attempt to pursue its national interest through the use of military force.

Add to this the fact that there is no real defense against nuclear arms nor against various forms of terrorism and guerilla warfare, and it becomes evident that—in our present world system—there is no such thing as "national" or "international" peace and security.

We need to construct a system which transcends competitive national interest while pursuing the common human and global interest, true peace. So long as nation-states maintain the uncontrolled ability to make war, children will not be secure. So long as nations continue to spend ever-increasing amounts on the wasteful, potentially lethal arms race, children's needs will not be met.

The war system in the nuclear era is the most monstrous and systematic form of child abuse. Millions of children will not survive because of unmet needs, and many children have expressed the fear that they will die in a nuclear war. And this does not even take into account the effects on children of "conventional" armed conflict such as that in Northern Ireland. The psychic damage there has been assessed by some psychiatrists and psychologists as nearly irreparable.

What Patricia and Gerald Mische have called "the national security straitjacket" in their book, *Toward a Human World Order*, is a vicious restraint upon children who, as non-participants in the political process, have no means to defend themselves against the abuses of the war system. Indeed, the image of the "defenseless child" is no more poignant than when interests of the child are threatened by the armed might of the nation-state, the basic component of the war system. Indeed, it is a component for which children pay dearly in terms of their present security and future development.

A Parenting Society

The paradigm shift most conducive to meeting the needs of children would be one in which the personal and the relational, the human and the global replace the individual, institutional and international constructs which have brought us to our present state in which there is limited hope for any viable future—much less a more humane one for our children. In sum, the shift is an attempt to focus on human beings rather than abstract processes; to see things in universal human terms; in some way to recapture the perspective of childhood where little is fixed and anything is possible.

More than a shift in perspective, however, is required. *A major shift in values* is absolutely essential. Again, the emphasis is on human values rather than technical and material values. The person must become our central concern and the child as person our guiding concept in dealing with concerns of the child in the present and future.

Such a paradigm shift would move us from a *punitive* to a *parenting* society—one less concerned with punishment of wrongdoing and defense against evil (both defined as that not seen in the interest of the status quo) and more focused on nurturing human development.

A parenting society would not be one in which the parental function would be performed by public institutions. Far from it. It would be one in which the society acknowledges and facilitates personal relations, intimacy and support systems which in most human experience are provided by families. These families—whether biological or intentional—would be supported by a strong community structure —either place-rooted or intentional; that would demonstrate a sense of relationship and common good with the larger global community. The transnational community in turn would embrace the peoples of the world as members of the natural human family rather than of synthetic nation-states.

The policies of the public order would be motivated by the same goals which inform the public and private actions of concerned parents:

1. the safest, most healthful environment and the most harmonious supportive community in which children can grow;
2. the best possible education to provide the most effective preparation to become fulfilled adults;
3. social security for their children which would assure them adequate health care and the meeting of their

fundamental emotional and physical needs, even if the parents were deceased or incapacitated;

4. most important of all, the expectation of a future, and if it is humanly possible, one that is better than the present.

This simple vision of the purposes of the public order in a parenting society brings home two important facts: little of what most parents strive for is really possible in the present national security-oriented society, and when people are motivated by parental concern, they struggle for the very things so urgently needed by the entire human family.

A parenting society would be a caring society, one which would put a high priority on meeting human needs, especially those of children, and a high value on the care of children. This is the very antithesis of the present circumstances in which little or no social value is placed on child care and nurturing functions. If families with children were able to adequately meet their needs, there would be less reason to resort to institutions. The parenting society would not only prepare people to parent, it would also ensure them adequate resources to do so.

In a parenting society every adult would be a child development expert and would have been taught parenting skills and responsibilities from the days of his own childhood. "Child care" would mean much more than bathing babies, diagnosing childhood illness and knowing the basics of nutrition. It would emphasize the need to struggle for and maintain a social order in which each child's personhood was respected, a respect demonstrated by children's realization of the world-order values.

SOME STEPS TOWARD A PREFERRED FUTURE

So much for the image of the preferred future. What about steps from the present toward that future? It is widely recognized by world order scholars and strategists that planning the *transition* from the present system to a preferred one is the most difficult world order task. Outlining a comprehensive transition strategy is not the task of this paper. But in the hope of encouraging wide and vigorous discussion of such strategies which might be elaborated by using the criteria of universalism and futurism, a few transition steps are suggested. These few steps could become rallying points for IYC efforts toward the parenting society. They are goals which are based on the diagnosis of children's deprivation of world order values as outlined earlier in this paper.

1. *Peace.* Although without complete and general disarmament we cannot hope to promise a peaceful future to our children, we can make a major effort at reducing the probability of nuclear war. A mass call from all who care about children to outlaw nuclear weapons would be a positive step in that direction. Americans in 1979 could mobilize to make the banning of nuclear weapons a major issue in the 1980 election campaigns. Such an effort could, as well, contribute to the movement for general and complete disarmament—the cornerstone of peace—which for our children's sake should become a goal to be completed within this generation. For without *real disarmament* there will be no peace system. To many of us, disarmament in the twentieth century is the best assurance of survival in the twenty-first century.

2. *Ecological Balance.* The most recent news of the flaws in the cooling systems of many nuclear reactors would suggest that to avoid ecological disaster, much less assure ecological balance, we should demand, at the least, a moratorium on the operation and construction of nuclear power plants. If we care for our children, we cannot continue to permit them to be vulnerable to nuclear accidents or exposed to radiation.

3. *Economic Well-Being.* A world surviving in a state of economic well-being must be one in which the economic inequities of the present system have been overcome. A truly fair sharing of the world's resources cannot be brought about under the present system even within the context of the New International Economic Order, for even that concept does not, as it now stands, provide structural change of sufficient dimension to assure the economic well-being of millions now impoverished. However, as a transitional step we could at least try to reduce by three million per year the number of children suffering from severe malnutrition. We could undertake as a goal for the three-year IYC action period the elimination of the dreadful conditions of ten million malnourished children. If we were to call for a ten percent annual reduction in military expenditures in order to spend an equal amount on the health and nutrition needs of pregnant women, infants and young children, we could make significant progress toward overcoming the "irreversible injustice" referred to earlier. It might even be possible to provide resources for adequate family care and parenting for millions more children.

4. *Social Justice.* It will take generations to overcome the deep-rooted racist and sexist attitudes and practices which have stunted and distorted the development of millions of children and brought untold pain and suffering to them and their parents. However, the cause of social justice for children might be well served by a serious effort to review curriculum materials and popular media to root out those elements of racism and sexism to which most of our children are exposed.

5. *Participation.* While the legitimate participation of children is doubtless generations away, we can work in the present to assure that their interests and those of future generations are adequately represented in the decisions which affect them and all the disenfranchised.

A special cabinet post or presidential advisor should be sought—not for children's "issues" or "affairs,"—but for children's *interests.* The admirable efforts of child advocacy groups are hardly adequate to the task of representing children. At best these groups can only try to avoid as many negative consequences of policy decisions as possible.

Indeed, why not also a representative of children's interests at the United Nations? Like all deliberative bodies, the United Nations badly needs an ombudsman for future generations. The process for appointment or election offers intriguing possibilities for human invention and there is no better time to begin these inventions than during the International Year of the Child.

Outlandish as it may seem, unless the interests of children are taken seriously in the seats of power and the halls of representation, the child will always be in need of "special" care—a specialness due not to their temporary stage of life but to the usual sufferings that befall the vulnerable in our present social order.

We who want better things for our children and for all children must work for significant structural change. Efforts at changing the social order which presently confines us in the "national security straitjacket" would be the most effective form of child advocacy. There are many important, urgently needed programs being developed for IYC; but too many of them respond to the "special conditions of vulnerability" that prevail in our violent, discriminatory society; and too few propose to change the society.

While these five rallying points cannot in themselves significantly change the social order, they can help us to think in more long range global terms. Each attempts to offer one response to the deprivation of world order values which would be of global benefit to this and future generations. Each also attempts to reflect the policy criteria of the parenting society. For all the earth's children let us call for:

- the banning of nuclear weapons
- a moratorium on the building of nuclear power plants
- a ten percent per annum reduction in arms expenditures to be spent on children's needs, especially to provide them

with adequate food and the care and love of their parents
the elimination of sexist and racist biases in curricular materials and mass media
- actual representation of the interests of children and future generations in the United States government and at the United Nations

One Particular Child

Estela Matriano—another advocate of *the child as participant* in shaping a new global order—suggests that, in reflecting on actions to be taken for IYC, we keep in mind the image of one particular child, deriving our visions of the preferred world from our very concrete hopes for that child. She suggests that we dedicate our actions to that child, to inspire ourselves with hope and motivation.

This essay is dedicated to Raphael in the hope that he and all like him will hold fast to his personhood and, never submit to his vulnerability; in the hope, too, that he will join the struggle for the changes that will overcome the inevitable vulnerability of so many of the world's young, poor and physically and socially handicapped.

But let us also keep in mind the child as victim—victim of the daily tragedies which befall children throughout the planet. If we imagine our particular child as victim of those tragedies,as a refugee from radiation or warfare or suffering from hunger or disease due to poverty, we will have to act for change.

They are all *particular children;* that entire 35 percent of the world's population are *our children.* Let us fulfill our *parental concerns* for all of them!

Notes

1. Hubert H. Humphrey as quoted in *World Military and Social Expenditures 1977* by Ruth Sivard. (WMSE Publications, Box 1003, Leesburg, VA 20075).

2. More detailed description of world order studies have been described by the author in various articles, reprints of which are available from the World Without War Council - Midwest, 67 East Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60603.

3. Further information about the research and programs of the Institute for World Order may be obtained from the Institute at 1140 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036.

4. Carlos Mallman, "Irreversible Injustices and the New International Economic Order." Unpublished. (Bariloche Foundation, 1976).

5. Irma Garcia Chafardet, "Sexism and Public Policy." Unpublished. A paper presented at the International Symposium on Women and Political Participation, sponsored by COPRED (the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development) in 1978.

6. Ruth Sivard, op. cit.

7. Gerald and Patricia Mische, *Toward a Human World Order: Beyond the National Security Straitjacket* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).

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For a more complete listing of world order books and materials write to the *Institute for World Order,* 1140 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036 or to *Global Education Associates,* 552 Park Avenue, East Orange, N.J. 07017.

RECOMMENDED READINGS & RESOURCES

I. **On International Year of the Child**

The U.S. Committee for UNICEF has a large variety of materials related to IYC, including informational packets, posters, films, slides and filmstrips, teacher kits, children's kits and an IYC newsletter. Write or call: U.S. Committee for UNICEF, 331 East 38th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016, (212) 686-5522.

The U.S. National Commission for IYC has information on IYC activities in the United States. Write or call: Jean Young (Mrs. Andrew Young), U.S.-IYC chairperson, 726 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506, (202) 456-6672.

The Population Reference Bureau has published a Population Bulletin entitled "World of Children." Concluding that today's children do not "fare well," the booklet explores many of the hardships children face. The publication is accompanied by a "World's Children Data Sheet," which is excellent for quick reference or as instructional material. Write: Circulation Department, Population Reference Bureau, Inc., P.O. Box 35012, Washington, D.C. 20013.

II. **On World Order**

Clark, Grenville and Sohn, Louis. *World Peace Through World Law.* Chicago: World Without War Council, 1966.

Cleveland, Harlan. *Third Try at World Order.* New York: Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, 1977.

Falk, Richard and Mendlovitz, Saul, editors. *Regional Politics and World Order.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1973.

Laszlo, Erwin. *Goals for Mankind.* New York: Dutton, 1977.

Meadows, Donella; Meadows, Dennis L.; Randers, Jorgen; and Behrens, William W., III. *The Limits to Growth.* Washington: Potomac Associates, 1972.

Mendlovitz, Saul, editor. *Legal and Political Problems of World Order.* New York: Institute for World Order, 1962.

_____ *On the Creation of Just World Order.* New York: Free Press, 1975.

_____ *The Strategy of World Order.* New York: Institute for World Order, 1966.

Mische, Gerald and Patricia. *Toward a Human World Order.* New York: Paulist Press, 1977.

Reischauer, Edwin O. *Toward the 21st Century: Education for a Changing World.* New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

Weston, Burns, et al. *Peace and World Order Studies.* New York: Institute for World Order, 1978.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

The General Assembly has designated 1979 as International Year of the Child (IYC). The purpose of the year is to build "a framework for advocacy on behalf of the child," putting the child "in the center of world attention and concern." IYC will coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child which states that every child has the right to:

- affection, love and understanding;
- adequate nutrition and medical care;
- free education;
- full opportunity for play and recreation;
- a name and nationality;
- special care, if handicapped;
- be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster;
- learn to be a useful member of society and develop individual abilities;
- be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood;
- enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.

The International Year of the Child is concerned with all children in all countries, especially young children. The major aims of IYC are to:

- encourage all countries, rich and poor, to review their programs for the promotion of the well-being of children, and to mobilize support for national and local action programs according to each country's conditions, needs and priorities;
- heighten awareness of children's special needs among decision-makers and the public;
- promote recognition of the vital link between programs for children on the one hand, and economic and social progress on the other;
- spur specific, practical measures—with achievable goals—to benefit children, in both the short and long term on the national level.

The Year should also provide an opportunity to emphasize the intellectual, psychological and social development of children, in addition to their physical welfare.

This monograph, along with others in *The Whole Earth Papers*, is published by Global Education Associates, as part of their educational services. The papers are an effort to foster grassroot consciousness of the linkages between local and global concerns and of the needs and opportunities to undertake initiatives toward a more human world order.

The Whole Earth Papers are being written following the publication of *TOWARD A HUMAN WORLD ORDER: Beyond the National Security Straitjacket* (Paulist 1977) as a further development of and dialogue on the analysis and strategies outlined by Gerald and Patricia Mische in that book.

The Whole Earth Papers are designed as educational tools for adult and classroom educators, community organizers, lobbyists and issue constituency leaders as well as for individual and group study and reflection. G.E.A. welcomes comments on the papers, suggestions on topics for future issues and ideas on strategy and action which grassroots groups can undertake.

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